

1 soils on a farm to selectively apply certain fertilizers to soils having certain colors. It may well  
2 be used to identify and sort vegetables, fruits and other products by color and ripeness.  
3 Similarly, the invention may well find applicability in numerous industrial, medical and  
4 biological applications of collecting, identifying or processing products and objects including  
5 fluids and animal tissue by color. Such uses may include the early detection of skin cancers.  
6 Another diverse application would relate to color bar coding in which this invention would  
7 facilitate the encoding and reading of far more information than the present black and white bar  
8 coding. Other uses and modifications of this invention such as these will be apparent to those of  
9 ordinary skill in the art from the contents of this application.

10 **I Claim:**

11 1. A high speed, low cost, wide spectrum plant identifier apparatus adapted to be  
12 mounted on a farm vehicle for selectively identifying plants within a field by species and for  
13 selectively applying chemicals thereto for the purposes of reducing the chemical costs and the  
14 excessive chemical application which may otherwise result in pollution problems, said apparatus  
15 comprising:

16 a) a sensing device for receiving reflected light from a plant, said device including a  
17 diffraction element for separating the reflected light into segments of different wavelengths and a  
18 linear sensor array having elements positioned to receive the segments and to measure the  
19 relative magnitude of such segments to define a wide spectral distribution of the plant;

20 b) a digital identifier connected to said sensing device and having a memory for  
21 memorizing a spectral distribution of light representing a first plant species from the field, and

12 additional memory for receiving a spectral distributions of other plants from the field and  
13 programmable logic circuitry;

14 c) said logic circuitry having a program to compare the reflected spectral distribution of  
15 other plants with the memorized spectral distribution of the first species and to provide an output  
16 indicating substantial similarity between the distributions for effecting selective application of  
17 chemicals to the plants of the first species as the associated farm vehicle traverses a field.

1 2. An apparatus as recited in Claim 1 in which said identifier comprises a Digital Signal  
2 Processor.

1 3. An apparatus as recited in Claim 1 in which said program includes the routine of  
2 making a regression analysis to determine the similarity between a first plant species and the  
3 other plants.

1 4. An apparatus as recited in Claim 1 in which the logic circuitry includes a switch for  
2 modifying the degree of similarity to be detected between the spectral distributions.

1 5. A low cost, lightweight, high speed spectral sensing method for identifying and  
2 collecting information on the physical condition of objects for remote analysis of their physical  
3 condition, comprising the steps of :

4 a) sensing the spectral distribution of a plurality of segments of wave lengths of light

reflected by the object;

b) electronically measuring the magnitude of the segments of the reflected wavelengths to define a wide spectrum distribution of light received from said object; and

c) transmitting the spectrum distribution to a readable electronic memory for subsequent analysis and identification of the physical condition of the object.

6. The method as recited in claim 5 which includes the step of visually depicting the spectral distribution.

7. The method recited in Claim 6 which includes the step of receiving and converting the electronic signals into digital information for storage, comparison or analysis of the object and its condition.

8. A high speed, low cost apparatus for selectively identifying objects, including fluids and tissue, and their condition, from within a population; said apparatus comprising:

a) a sensing device for receiving reflected light from a sample object from the population, said device including a lens diffraction device for separating the reflected light into a plurality of segments of wavelengths and for measuring the magnitude of the segments of reflected light to define a spectral distribution;

b) a digital identifier connected to said sensing device and having a memory for receiving and storing a spectral distribution of light representing the sample object from said population;

c) said digital identifier also having a memory for receiving and storing sequential

11 spectral distributions from additional objects of the population;

12 d) said digital identifier having logic circuitry programmed to compare the subsequent  
13 spectral distribution with the memorized spectral distribution and to provide an output  
14 indicating similarity between the distributions.

1 9. An apparatus as recited in claim 9 in which the output of the digital identifier is  
2 connected to an activator for applying an action to an identified, similar object.

1 10. A low cost, digital identifier apparatus for identifying similarities of spectral  
2 distributions of two objects, said apparatus comprising:

3 a) a micro controller;

4 b) said micro controller having electronic memory elements for receiving digital  
5 signals reflecting a first wide spectral distribution of light segments reflected from an object;

6 c) electronic memory elements for receiving digital signals reflecting spectral  
7 distribution of light segments from other objects;

8 d) logic circuitry including memory containing instructions for a regression analysis  
9 program for comparing the first spectral distribution of light segments with the spectral  
10 distribution of another object and for generating an output signal reflecting the results of said  
11 comparison.

1 11. An identifier apparatus as recited in claim 10 in which said apparatus is a Digital  
2 Signal Processor.

1 12. In an apparatus as recited in claim 10 in which said logic circuitry is programmed  
2 to generate an output signal upon calculation of a high coefficient of correlation.

1 13. A low cost, high speed method for facilitating evaluation of selected objects, said  
2 method comprising the steps of:

3 a) obtaining a spectral distribution of reflected light segments from at least one  
4 sample object of a population;

5 b) sequentially generating a spectral distribution of additional objects of a population;

6 c) comparing said spectral distribution of the additional objects with the distribution  
7 of said sample object and producing an output signal when said distributions are substantially  
8 similar.

1 14. A method as recited in claim 13 in which said spectral distribution of said sample  
2 object is obtained by reflecting light from an actual object of said population.

1 15. A method as recited in Claim 13 in which the degree of similarity required to  
2 generate the output signal can be increased or decreased.

1 16. An apparatus for accumulating and transmitting a wide spectral analysis of [an]  
2 objects including tissue and fluids for early analysis and detection of its condition , said  
3 apparatus comprising:

4 a) a sensor array for accumulating a plurality of charges reflecting a wide spectrum

5 color distribution of light segments reflected by an object to be analyzed;

6       b) a transmittal device connected to said array for transmitting said spectral  
7 distribution to a memory device for early analysis of the spectral distribution of light of said  
8 object to detect its physical condition.

1       17. An apparatus as recited in claim 17 in which an analog to digital converter is  
2 interposed between said array and said transmittal device for transmitting said distribution in  
3 digital form.

4       18. A lightweight, portable apparatus for sampling the condition or identity of  
5 agricultural plants and their fruit and for electronically recording the sample for identification  
6 and analysis, said device comprising:

- 7       a) a housing having an opening for receiving light therethrough,  
8       b) a diffraction device for receiving said light and for diffracting said light into a plurality  
9 of segments having different wavelengths,  
10       c) an array carried by the housing and aligned to receive a plurality of segments having  
11 different wavelengths and to generate a voltage whose magnitude generally correlates to the  
12 intensity of said segments to define a spectral fingerprint; and,  
13       d) a communication circuit associated with said housing for transmitting, by segment, the  
14 spectral fingerprint to an electronic memory for analysis of the condition or identify of the  
15 agricultural product.

1 19. An apparatus as recited in claim 18 in which said communication circuit is a  
2 compliant RS 232 port.

1 20. An apparatus as recited in claim 19 in which said communication circuit is  
2 connected to a memory device.

1 21. A low cost, lightweight, sensing method for obtaining spectral information on the  
2 physical condition of objects for subsequent analysis of their physical condition, comprising  
3 the steps of :

4 a) sensing the spectral distribution of a plurality of segments of wave lengths of light  
5 reflected by the object;

6 b) electronically measuring the magnitude of the segments of the reflected  
7 wavelengths to define a spectrum distribution of light received from said object; and

8 c) transmitting the spectrum distribution to a readable electronic memory for  
9 subsequent analysis and identification of the physical condition of the object.  
10

1 22. A method as recited in claim 21 in which said magnitude of the segments of the  
2 reflected wavelengths is converted to digital format prior to its transmission.

1 23. A method as recited in claim 21 in which said spectral distribution is transmitted  
2 via an RS 232 port.

1 24. A method as recited in claim 21 in which said spectral distribution comprises at  
2 least 3 data points.

1 25. A method for comparing selected objects, said method comprising the steps of:

- 2 a) obtaining a spectral distribution of reflected light segments from at a representative  
3 of a sample species of a population;  
4 b) sequentially generating a spectral distribution of additional species of a population;  
5 c) comparing said spectral distribution of the additional species with the distribution  
6 of said representative and producing an output signal when said distributions are substantially  
7 similar.

1 26. A method as recited in claim 24 in which said spectral distributions comprises at  
2 least three data points.

1 27. A method as recited in claim 24 in which said spectral distributions are compared  
2 by a mathematical algorithm.

1 28. A low cost apparatus for selectively identifying objects, including fluids and  
2 tissue, and their condition, from within a population; said apparatus comprising:

- 3 a) a sensing device for receiving reflected light from objects of a population, said  
4 device including a lens diffraction device for separating the reflected light into a plurality of  
5 segments of wavelengths and for directing said segments upon an array for measuring the



6 magnitude of the segments of reflected light to define a spectral distribution;

7       b) a digital identifier connected to said sensing device and having a memory for  
8 receiving and storing a spectral distribution of light representing a sample object from said  
9 population;

10       c) said digital identifier also having a memory for receiving and storing sequential  
11 spectral distributions from various objects of the population;

12       d) said digital identifier having logic circuitry programmed to compare the subsequent  
13 spectral distribution with the memorized spectral distribution and to provide an output  
14 indicating similarity between the distributions.

1       29. An apparatus as recited in claim 27 in which said sensing device is calibrated such  
2 that the same segments of diffracted light wavelengths are repeatedly separated and diffracted  
3 upon substantially the same area of the array.

1       30. An apparatus as recited in claim 27 in which said sensing device is aligned such  
2 that at least one segment of wavelengths of light is always diffracted upon the same area of the  
3 array.

1       31. An apparatus as recited in claim 27 in which said spectral distribution comprises  
2 at least three data points.